General Assembly

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Agenda item 131

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 April 2015

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/69/702/Add.1)*]

69/272. Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 59/272 of 23 December 2004 and 60/254 of 8 May 2006, section I of its resolution 60/260 of 8 May 2006 and its resolutions 60/283 of 7 July 2006, 61/245 of 22 December 2006, 63/276 of 7 April 2009, 64/259 of 29 March 2010, 66/257 of 9 April 2012, 67/253 of 12 April 2013 and 68/264 of 9 April 2014,

Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat and the accountability of the Secretary-General for the performance of the Secretariat to all Member States,

Emphasizing that accountability is a central pillar of effective and efficient management that requires attention and strong commitment at all levels of the Secretariat, especially at the highest level,

Recognizing and reaffirming the important role of the oversight bodies in the development of an accountability system that is relevant to the United Nations,

Having considered the fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat[1] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]

1. *Takes note* of the fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat;[1]

2. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of promoting a culture of accountability, results-based management, enterprise risk management and internal control at all levels in the Secretariat through the continued leadership and commitment of senior

[1] A/69/676.
[2] A/69/802.

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managers, and reiterates its request that the Secretary-General take appropriate measures to that end, including the training of relevant staff;

4. *Reiterates* the provisions of paragraphs 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 19 of section I of its resolution 66/257;

5. *Also reiterates* the provisions of paragraphs 8, 26 and 28 of its resolution 68/264;

6. *Stresses* the role and responsibility of the Management Committee in promoting and advancing the accountability system as a whole;

Enterprise risk management system and internal control framework

7. *Notes with appreciation* the progress made towards strengthening the enterprise risk management system, including the development of a risk register, the establishment of a governance structure for enterprise risk management and the designation of a corporate risk owner for each of the six critical risks identified, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to implement and embed enterprise risk management throughout the United Nations by managing and mitigating the identified risks, in particular the six most critical risks, and developing concrete risk treatment action plans, and to report thereon in the context of the next progress report on accountability;

8. *Welcomes* the efforts made by the Secretary-General to implement a coherent and integrated enterprise risk management system that will contribute to embedding or fostering a culture of risk management in the working habits of staff members of the Secretariat, and requests him to ensure the continued commitment at all levels of the governance structure in order to achieve that goal, and to report on concrete actions taken in this regard in the context of the next progress report on accountability;

9. *Looks forward* to the results of the pilot implementation of the enterprise risk management system at the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and emphasizes the importance of identifying and sharing lessons learned and best practices with regard to its implementation with other field missions during the phased implementation at those missions;

Results-based management

10. *Reaffirms* that results-based management and performance reporting are essential pillars of a comprehensive accountability framework;

11. *Recalls* paragraph 12 of its resolution 68/264, and reiterates its request that the Secretary-General identify appropriate methods and tools to portray the efficiency with which the Secretariat undertakes its work;

12. *Notes* the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations of the results-based management working group, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to accelerate the implementation of the results-based management framework throughout the Secretariat in a phased manner, taking into account the provisions of paragraph 6 of its resolution 67/253;

13. *Commends* the Secretary-General for the steps taken to promote a culture of self-evaluation throughout the Organization and to mainstream the use of relevant monitoring and evaluation tools in programme planning and implementation, requests him to continue to provide staff with adequate training, and looks forward

to receiving updated information on the results of the pilot for strengthening the self-evaluation capacity in the Department of Management of the Secretariat;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in the next progress report on accountability a detailed plan, with a fixed time frame and clear milestones, for the implementation of results-based management as part of the regular functioning of the Organization;

15. *Reaffirms* the recommendations contained in paragraph 16 of the report of the Advisory Committee,[3] as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/259, and requests the Secretary-General to include a status update in the context of the next progress report on accountability;

Personal accountability

16. *Emphasizes* the importance of establishing and fully implementing real, effective and efficient mechanisms that foster institutional and personal accountability at all levels;

17. *Reiterates* that compacts and end-of-year assessments are unique accountability tools for senior managers and contribute to transparency in the Organization;

18. *Reiterates its requests* to the Secretary-General to take further concrete measures to ensure that the compacts system becomes a meaningful and powerful instrument of accountability, to take actions to address systemic issues that prevent managers from meeting their targets, in particular those related to compliance with the recruitment timeline, and to report to the General Assembly on the progress achieved in this regard in the context of the next progress report on accountability;

19. *Recalls* paragraph 14 of the report of the Advisory Committee,[2] and requests the Secretary-General to include additional objectives and indicators in the senior managers' compacts in order to assess the performance of senior managers with respect to the effective and efficient management of resources, and to provide an update in this regard in the next progress report on accountability;

20. *Notes with appreciation* the inclusion in the senior managers' compacts for 2015 of a new standard managerial indicator related to the timely issuance of documentation to intergovernmental bodies and General Assembly committees, as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 69/250 of 29 December 2014, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that it continues to be included in future compacts;

Strengthening accountability in field missions

21. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue efforts to strengthen accountability in all sectors of field missions and to ensure the full implementation of the zero-tolerance policy of the Organization regarding any kind of sexual exploitation and abuse, and looks forward to its consideration of the matter in the context of the next report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations;

[3] A/64/683 and Corr.1.

International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the Umoja enterprise resource planning system

22. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen and improve the accountability framework by taking advantage of the benefits related to the deployment of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the Umoja enterprise resource planning system, and requests him to report thereon in the context of the next progress report on accountability;

23. *Recalls* paragraph 16 of the report of the Advisory Committee,[2] emphasizes that a lack of adequate information for decision-making processes continues to hamper the ability of the Organization to achieve the goals set out in the enhanced accountability framework and to establish an appropriate performance measurement and reporting system, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to present his detailed plan to deal with the current weaknesses related to the data and information needs of the Organization in the areas of programme planning, monitoring and reporting;

Ethics and accountability

24. *Notes* the continuing efforts and recent initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat to strengthen ethics in the Organization, including the ethics and reputational risk assessment referred to in paragraph 86 of the report of the Secretary-General, and emphasizes the importance of enhancing the processes and responses of the Organization to ensure that it encourages the reporting of serious misconduct, protects whistle-blowers from retaliation and intervenes to prevent retaliation;

Strengthening accountability in procurement

25. *Recalls* paragraph 33 of the report of the Advisory Committee,[2] and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the procurement training programme fully addresses the provisions of the United Nations Procurement Manual regarding the respective roles of the Headquarters Committee on Contracts and the local committees on contracts in the procurement process and that the general principles of United Nations procurement are taken into account in developing an accountability system;

Other matters

26. *Recalls* paragraph 35 of the report of the Advisory Committee,[2] notes the comments of the Committee with regard to the chain of decision-making and the effectiveness of internal controls, requests the Secretary-General to hold staff members, in particular senior managers, accountable for misconduct, and stresses the need to address mismanagement and poor decision-making in an effective manner, in particular to reduce such instances by sharing best practices and lessons learned;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to submit for its consideration an annual report on progress made towards the implementation of the accountability framework, and encourages him to consider including information on accountability with respect to the issues contained in sections III to VIII of his report in the reports on related substantive agenda items;

28. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at the first part of its resumed seventieth session on the implementation of the accountability framework, and decides to revert to the question of the frequency of future progress reports on accountability in the context of that report.

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2 April 2015